

FOR WIRE TRANSMISSION 8:30 A.M. ET, Thursday, May 11, 2000.

**ADVANCE MONTHLY RETAIL SALES  
APRIL 2000**

**Notice of Revised Data:** Monthly retail sales data was revised based on the results of the 1998 Annual Retail Trade Survey. The Annual Benchmark Report for Retail Trade showing revised data was released on April 28, 2000.

The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce announced today that advance estimates of U.S. retail sales for April, adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes, were \$266.0 billion, a decrease of 0.2 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) from the previous month, but up 9.7 percent ( $\pm 0.9\%$ ) from April 1999. Total sales for the February through April period were up 10.3 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) from the same period a year ago. The February to March 2000 percent change was revised from +0.2 percent ( $\pm 0.7\%$ ) to +0.5 percent ( $\pm 0.4\%$ ).

Durable goods decreased 0.6 percent ( $\pm 1.4\%$ ) from March but were 10.2 percent above last year. Automotive sales were up 10.7 percent from April a year ago, while furniture sales were up 10.8 percent from last year.

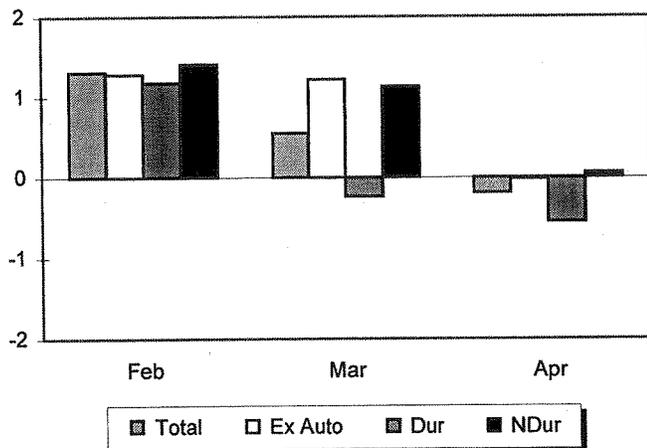
Nondurable goods increased 0.1 percent ( $\pm 0.6\%$ ) from March and were up 9.3 percent from April 1999. Gasoline sales were up 23.2 percent from April a year ago, while drug store sales were up 7.8 percent from last year.

*The advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the advance and because of sampling variability present in both surveys.*

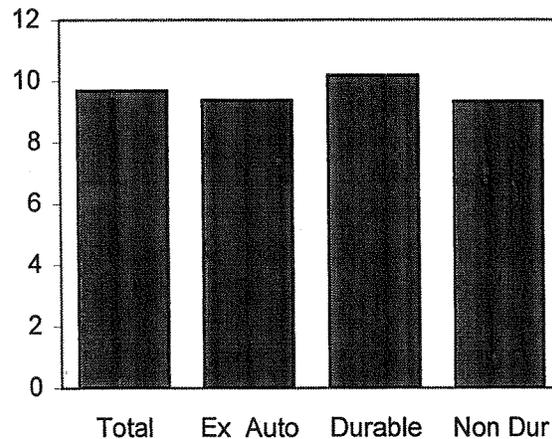
**Percent Change in Retail Sales**

(Data adjusted for seasonal, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)

**From Previous Month**



**From Previous Year**



The Advance Monthly Retail Sales Report for May is scheduled to be released June 13, 2000 at 8:30 a.m.

Address inquiries concerning this report to Scott Scheleur, Service Sector Statistics Division, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC 20233. Telephone: 301-457-2713 or 301-457-2666.

This report is available the day of issue through the Department of Commerce's online Economic Bulletin Board. For information call 202-482-1986. The data are also available on the Internet - <http://www.census.gov/svsd/www/advtable.html>.

# Table 1. Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, By Kind of Business

(In Millions of Dollars and Annual Percent Change)

SIC code	Kind of business	Not adjusted							Adjusted <sup>1</sup>				
		4 month total		2000			1999		2000			1999	
		2000	Change from 1999	Apr. <sup>2</sup> (a)	Mar. (p)	Feb. (r)	Apr.	Mar.	Apr. <sup>2</sup> (a)	Mar. (p)	Feb. (r)	Apr. (r)	Mar. (r)
	<b>Retail trade, total</b> .....	<b>1,001,367</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>259,242</b>	<b>270,900</b>	<b>243,015</b>	<b>240,882</b>	<b>242,654</b>	<b>265,995</b>	<b>266,510</b>	<b>265,054</b>	<b>242,494</b>	<b>240,476</b>
	Total (excl. auto dealers).....	737,735	10.4	193,640	196,718	176,926	178,094	177,016	199,667	199,706	197,300	182,560	180,815
	<b>Durable goods, total</b> .....	<b>423,744</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>108,217</b>	<b>117,062</b>	<b>104,564</b>	<b>102,810</b>	<b>104,381</b>	<b>111,147</b>	<b>111,762</b>	<b>112,034</b>	<b>100,864</b>	<b>100,399</b>
52	Building mat., hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers.	55,558	5.8	16,666	15,576	12,029	16,359	14,165	15,693	15,949	15,222	14,768	14,563
521,3	Building mat. and supply stores..	(*)	(*)	(*)	12,418	9,741	12,286	11,040	(*)	12,620	12,026	11,313	11,242
525	Hardware stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,262	997	1,424	1,215	(*)	1,341	1,285	1,328	1,309
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	263,632	12.5	65,602	74,182	66,089	62,788	65,638	66,328	66,804	67,754	59,934	59,661
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	250,702	12.9	62,231	70,637	63,020	59,390	62,314	62,923	63,352	64,306	56,616	56,393
551	Motor vehicle (franchised)....	(*)	(*)	(*)	59,910	53,919	50,197	53,353	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
553	Auto and home supply stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,545	3,069	3,398	3,324	(*)	3,452	3,448	3,318	3,268
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	53,646	11.7	13,001	14,162	13,340	11,939	12,717	14,446	14,407	14,332	13,033	13,040
571	Furniture and home furnishings.	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,903	6,337	5,901	6,192	(*)	6,924	6,881	6,238	6,261
5722,31,4	Household appliance, radio, TV and computer stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	6,241	6,080	5,136	5,558	(*)	6,427	6,420	5,771	5,754
5722	Household appliance stores.	(*)	(*)	(*)	975	889	871	890	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
	<b>Nondurable goods, total</b> .....	<b>577,623</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>151,025</b>	<b>153,838</b>	<b>138,451</b>	<b>138,072</b>	<b>138,273</b>	<b>154,848</b>	<b>154,748</b>	<b>153,020</b>	<b>141,630</b>	<b>140,077</b>
53	General merchandise group stores.	115,578	8.4	31,638	31,178	27,287	28,840	28,965	33,317	33,192	32,947	31,007	31,136
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts)..	89,761	7.7	24,826	24,126	21,055	22,664	22,693	25,969	25,859	25,677	24,370	24,506
531	Dept. stores (in. leased depts) <sup>3</sup> ..	(*)	(*)	(*)	24,575	21,454	23,104	23,114	(*)	26,328	26,222	24,851	24,941
533	Variety stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,259	1,132	1,064	1,079	(*)	1,311	1,298	1,140	1,117
539	Misc. general mdse. stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	5,793	5,100	5,112	5,193	(*)	6,022	5,972	5,497	5,513
54	Food stores.....	152,168	5.9	39,282	39,555	36,340	36,737	37,248	39,771	39,374	39,058	37,427	37,204
541	Grocery stores.....	144,468	5.8	37,234	37,572	34,448	34,844	35,355	37,763	37,348	37,041	35,519	35,320
554	Gasoline service stations.....	66,524	26.9	17,396	18,159	15,831	14,505	13,580	17,751	18,177	17,435	14,404	13,801
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	40,211	6.2	11,655	11,283	9,127	10,842	10,585	11,761	11,862	11,676	11,233	11,063
561	Men's and boy's clothing and furnishings stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	825	715	910	789	(*)	942	933	933	906
562,3	Women's clothing, accessory stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	3,176	2,481	3,113	2,973	(*)	3,264	3,129	3,073	3,071
565	Family clothing stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	4,328	3,523	4,082	4,037	(*)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)	(NA)
566	Shoe stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	1,840	1,512	1,821	1,809	(*)	1,836	1,822	1,812	1,746
58	Eating and drinking places.....	96,344	9.5	24,958	25,493	23,273	23,372	22,954	24,859	24,969	24,680	23,141	22,840
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	41,575	8.1	10,528	10,842	10,140	9,813	10,102	10,667	10,588	10,443	9,892	9,760
592	Liquor stores.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	2,303	2,080	2,186	2,061	(*)	2,437	2,419	2,275	2,211
5961	Total mail order.....	(*)	(*)	(*)	8,886	7,577	6,725	7,115	(*)	8,503	8,326	7,064	6,848
53,56,57,594	GAF <sup>4</sup> .....	(*)	(*)	(*)	64,459	57,523	58,871	59,637	(*)	68,647	68,127	63,833	63,839

\* Advance estimates are not available from the subsample panel for these kinds of business.

NA Not available. (a) Advance estimates. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

- (1) Data are concurrently adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes. Concurrent seasonal adjustment uses all available unadjusted estimates as input to the X-12 program and the factors derived from the program are used in calculating all seasonally adjusted data shown in this publication. Factors and explanatory material are contained in the Monthly Retail Trade Report, BR-00-03.
- (2) Advance estimates are based on early reporting by a small subsample of the full survey panel. All other estimates are based on the full sample.
- (3) Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.
- (4) GAF represents stores which specialize in department store types of merchandise (general merchandise, apparel, furniture, and miscellaneous shopping goods stores).

Note: Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

**Table 2. Percent Change in Estimated Monthly Retail Sales, by Kind of Business**

(Adjusted for seasonal variations, holiday, and trading-day differences, but not for price changes)

SIC code	Kind of business	Percent change <sup>1</sup>					
		Apr. 2000 Advance from --		Mar. 2000 Preliminary from --		Feb. 2000 through Apr. 2000 from --	
		Mar. 2000 (p)	Apr. 1999 (r)	Feb. 2000 (r)	Mar. 1999 (r)	Nov. 1999 through Jan. 2000	Feb. 1999 through Apr. 1999
	<b>Retail trade, total .....</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>9.7</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>10.3</b>
	Total (excl. automotive dealers) .....	0.0	9.4	1.2	10.4	2.7	9.7
	<b>Durable goods, total .....</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>11.0</b>
52	Building materials, hardware, garden supply, and mobile home dealers ....	-1.6	6.3	4.8	9.5	1.7	5.4
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	-0.7	10.7	-1.4	12.0	2.5	12.3
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and miscellaneous automotive dealers.....	-0.7	11.1	-1.5	12.3	2.7	12.7
57	Furniture, home furnishings, and equipment stores.....	0.3	10.8	0.5	10.5	3.2	10.7
	<b>Nondurable goods, total.....</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>9.8</b>
53	General merchandise group stores.....	0.4	7.4	0.7	6.6	2.0	7.0
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased dept.).....	0.4	6.6	0.7	5.5	1.7	5.9
531	Dept. stores (in. leased dept.) <sup>2</sup> .....	(NA)	(NA)	0.4	5.6	(NA)	(NA)
54	Food stores.....	1.0	6.3	0.8	5.8	0.8	5.5
541	Grocery stores.....	1.1	6.3	0.8	5.7	0.8	5.5
554	Gasoline service stations.....	-2.3	23.2	4.3	31.7	7.8	27.7
56	Apparel and accessory stores.....	-0.9	4.7	1.6	7.2	4.1	5.8
58	Eating and drinking places.....	-0.4	7.4	1.2	9.3	1.6	8.2
591	Drug and proprietary stores.....	0.7	7.8	1.4	8.5	1.8	7.8

NA Not available. (p) Preliminary. (r) Revised.

(1) Percent change rounded to nearest tenth.

(2) Includes data for leased departments operated within department stores. Data for this line not included in broader kind-of-business totals.

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### Reliability of Data

The Advance estimates are based on a small subsample of the Bureau's full retail sales sample. Estimates from the Advance and the subsequent full survey can differ because of the earlier reporting in the Advance and because of sampling variability present in each survey. The margin of sampling error, as used on page 1, gives a range about the estimate which is a 90% confidence interval. If, for example, the trend estimate is +1.2% and the standard error is 0.9%, then the margin of sampling error is  $\pm 1.65 \times 0.9\%$  or  $\pm 1.5\%$ , and the 90% confidence interval is -0.3% to +2.7%. If the interval contains 0, it is uncertain whether there was an increase or decrease. For monthly level, the coefficient of variation (CV) is given. The resulting confidence interval is the estimated value  $\pm 1.65 \times CV \times$  (the estimated value).

Estimates of sampling variability are given in Table 3. They are based on two components. The first component is a measure of the average

difference between the Advance and the Preliminary estimates. The second reflects the variability of the Preliminary estimate. Additionally, both the Advance and the full survey are subject to nonsampling errors. Such errors can occur because of nonresponse, insufficient coverage of the universe of retail businesses, and response errors, among others. Precautionary steps are taken to minimize these errors, but their magnitude is not directly measured.

Preliminary estimates for the current month and final estimates for the previous month based on the full sample are published next month in the Monthly Retail Trade Report. This report will provide sales estimates in greater detail and additional measures of sampling variability. It will also present a description of revisions and the techniques used in developing the estimates, and an explanation of confidence intervals and sampling variability (Appendix B, Reliability of Data).

**Table 3. Measures of Variability of and Revision to Advance Estimates for Level and Trend**

SIC code	Kind of Business	Level of sales: Estimated CV <sup>1</sup> for Current Mo. (x 100)	Trend (percent change): Estimated standard error <sup>1</sup> for			Revision for month- to-month change <sup>2</sup>	
			Current Mo. to Previous Mo.	Current Qtr. to Previous Qtr.	Current Mo. to Current Mo. Last Yr.	Average revision	Median absolute revision
	<b>Retail trade, total.....</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.3</b>
	Total (excl. auto dealers) .....	1.0	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.2	0.3
	<b>Durable goods, total .....</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.5</b>
52	Building materials group stores .....	3.5	1.9	1.1	2.7	0.0	1.2
55 ex. 554	Automotive dealers.....	1.6	1.2	0.8	1.5	0.3	0.5
551,2,5,6,7,9	Motor vehicle and misc. automotive dealers.....	1.8	1.3	0.9	1.6	0.5	0.6
57	Furniture, home furn, and equipment stores .....	2.0	1.4	0.7	1.8	0.4	0.8
	<b>Nondurable goods, total.....</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.3</b>
53	General merch. group, total.....	0.6	0.6	0.2	0.6	0.0	0.2
531	Dept. stores (ex. leased depts.)..	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.2
54	Food stores.....	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.5
541	Grocery stores .....	1.2	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.6
554	Gasoline service stations .....	2.2	1.2	1.4	1.4	0.8	1.1
56	Apparel and accessory stores .....	1.9	1.5	0.6	1.6	-0.1	0.7
58	Eating and drinking places .....	5.1	1.0	0.9	2.2	0.5	0.5
591	Drug and proprietary stores .....	1.7	0.8	0.4	1.2	-0.1	0.4



(1) The coefficients of variation (CVs) for level of sales and the standard errors for trends are medians based on estimates for the preceding 12 months.

(2) These columns measure the difference between the Advance/Preliminary ratio and the Preliminary/Final ratio estimates -- i.e., the difference between estimates of trend for the same pair of data months. The revisions are based on the latest 12 months of data.